

AGENDA ITEM: Transfer Application – Espiritu Community Development Corp.

Issue

Espiritu Community Development Corp. (ECDC), submitted a complete Transfer Application for transfer of Esperanza Montessori Academy (K-3) and Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy (4-6) from the current K-12 charter held by Espiritu Community Development Corp. to a new charter to be held by Espiritu Community Development Corp. to operate Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy serving grades K-6.

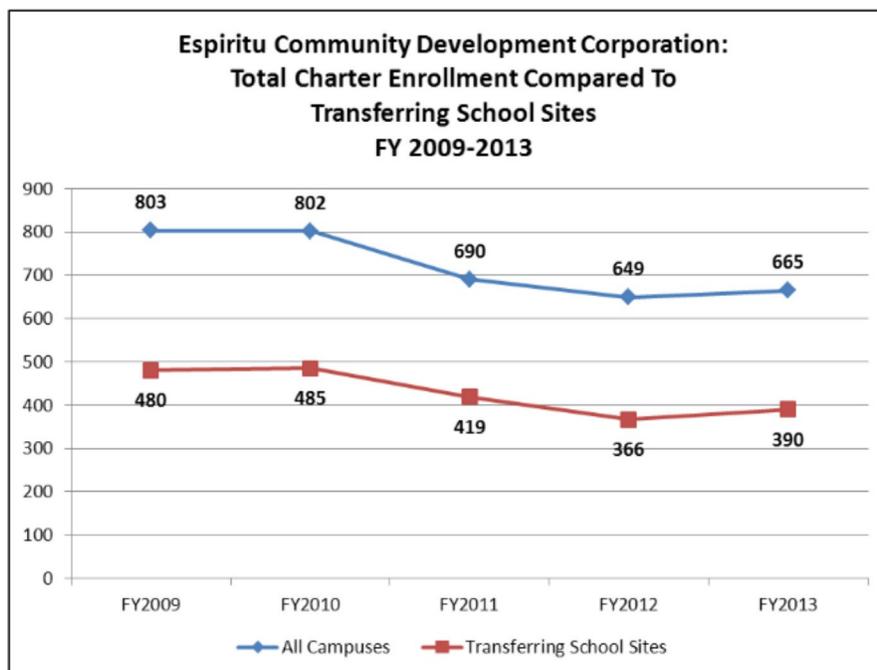
Background

ECDC was granted a charter in 1995 and opened NFL YET College Prep Academy serving grades 7-12, in July 1997, and Esperanza Montessori Academy, serving grades K-3, and Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy, serving grades 4-6, in July 2004. All three school sites are located in South Phoenix at separate facilities on the same property. The ECDC board minutes approving the transfer application indicate that the two school sites being transferred will be consolidated into a single K-6 school site named Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy.

The 3 schools are in an area characterized by a population that is 78% Hispanic, where 54% of adults have graduated from high school, and 77% of students qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program.

ECDC renewed its charter on July 12, 2010. Because the charter holder did not meet the Board's level of adequate academic performance, the charter holder was required to submit a Performance Management Plan as a part of the renewal process. The duration of the Performance Management Plan submitted with the renewal was from May 2010 through June 2015.

Each of the schools operates on a 180-day calendar. The graph below shows actual 100<sup>th</sup> day average daily membership (ADM) for fiscal years 2009-2013 for Espiritu Community Development Corp – all campuses, compared to the combined count of Esperanza Montessori Academy and Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy.



As stated in Board policy, prior to a charter holder being placed on an agenda, staff conducts an operational compliance check as part of the approval process. The charter holder is in compliance in all areas.

#### Curricular Emphasis:

The narrative submitted described the program of instruction as a Traditional Classical Education model that incorporates the trivium of classical education (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and character. According to the narrative, teachers use small groups in classes of no more than 28 students to provide students with individual instruction as part of standards-based lessons.

The methods of assessment described in the narrative include multiple sources of data such as DIBELS, Galileo, and teacher-created assessments. The narrative states that data is analyzed at weekly professional learning community meetings and used to make adjustments to instruction so that learning is targeted. According to the narrative, instructors formally present assessment data and instructional strategies to a panel of parents, mentor teachers, and school leaders on a quarterly basis.

The program of instruction and methods of assessment described in the narrative are consistent with the Performance Management Plan that was incorporated into the charter contract during renewal. The program of instruction to be implemented at the new charter operated by ECDC will be identical to the current program of instruction provided by ECDC under its current charter.

#### Academic Performance

The academic performance of Esperanza Montessori Academy and Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy for the FY2012 school year, as based upon the Board's academic framework, are represented in the dashboards below:

**Academic Performance Rating FY 2012**

Charter Holder: Espiritu Community Development Corp.  
Entity ID 4335

Charter School: Esperanza Montessori Academy  
Entity ID 85887, Grades K-3

1. Growth

Traditional Elementary		1a. SGP		1b. SGP Bottom 25%	
School	School Year	Math	Read	Math	Read
Esperanza Montessori Academy	2011-2012	43	54	29.5	69
<b>Points Assigned</b>		50	75	25	100
<b>Weight</b>		12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5

2. Proficiency

Traditional Elementary		2a. Percent Passing		2b. Composite School Comparison		2c. Subgroup ELL		2c. Subgroup FRL		2c. Subgroup SPED	
School	School Year	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read
Esperanza Montessori Academy	2011-2012	67/70	67/75	3.5	-1.8	56/49	62/51	67/61	67/67	NR	NR
<b>Points Assigned</b>		50	50	75	50	75	75	75	75	0	0
<b>Weight</b>		7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	0	0

3. State Accountability & Overall Rating

Traditional Elementary		3a. State Accountability	Overall Rating
School	School Year	Grade	
Esperanza Montessori Academy	2011-2012	50	61.875
<b>Points Assigned</b>		50	
<b>Weight</b>		5	100

Overall Rating	Point Range
Exceeds Standard	> or = to 89
Meets Standard	< 89, but > or = to 63
Does Not Meet Standard	< 63, but > or = to 39
Falls Far Below Standard	< 39

For additional information, see *Academic Performance Framework and Guidance*, available on the ASBCS webpage <http://asbcs.az.gov>

5/1/2013

**Academic Performance Rating FY 2012**

Charter Holder: Espiritu Community Development Corp.  
Entity ID 4335

Charter School: Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy  
Entity ID 85886, Grades 4-6

1. Growth

Traditional Elementary		1a. SGP		1b. SGP Bottom 25%	
School	School Year	Math	Read	Math	Read
Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy	2011-2012	80	66.5	86	76
<b>Points Assigned</b>		100	100	100	100
<b>Weight</b>		12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5

2. Proficiency

Traditional Elementary		2a. Percent Passing		2b. Composite School Comparison		2c. Subgroup ELL		2c. Subgroup FRL		2c. Subgroup SPED	
School	School Year	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read
Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy	2011-2012	64/64	73/78	6.5	0.3	49/38	57/50	64/54	73/70	NR	NR
<b>Points Assigned</b>		75	50	75	75	75	75	75	75	0	0
<b>Weight</b>		7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	0	0

3. State Accountability & Overall Rating

Traditional Elementary		3a. State Accountability	Overall Rating
School	School Year	Grade	
Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy	2011-2012	100	86.875
<b>Points Assigned</b>		100	
<b>Weight</b>		5	100

Overall Rating	Point Range
Exceeds Standard	> or = to 89
Meets Standard	< 89, but > or = to 63
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5/1/2013

As stated in the Board's Academic Performance Framework and Guidance document, a charter holder's academic performance will be evaluated by the Board when considering expansion requests. The academic performance of Esperanza Montessori Academy did not meet the Board's academic performance expectations set forth in the performance framework adopted by the Board. The academic performance of Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy met the Board's academic performance expectations. A Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP) was submitted by the charter representative. The DSP was evaluated using the criteria provided in Appendix D of the Board's Academic Performance Framework and Guidance document. The DSP is available in Appendix A. The evaluation of the DSP is available in Appendix C.

The initial evaluation of the DSP resulted in a determination of Acceptable in all areas. The charter holder provided assessment data demonstrating increases in the percent of students demonstrating mastery and described systems and processes in the areas of curriculum, monitoring instruction, assessment, and professional development that are in place to support and maintain the demonstrated improvement in academic performance.

On May 2, staff conducted a site visit and met with Adrian Ruiz, Executive Director; Adam Sharp, K-6 School Leader; Jason Hungerford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Teacher; and Edna Barbosa, K-6 Reading Specialist to review the initial evaluation of the DSP and confirm the information included in the charter holder's Demonstration of Sufficient Progress submission. All the evidence discussed in the DSP was confirmed at the site visit. Board staff conducted classroom observations and reviewed documents including teacher evaluation forms, curriculum maps and pacing calendars, assessment data reports, and professional development agendas described in the DSP narrative. A discussion with the school leadership team addressed the systems and processes in place including curriculum maps, lesson plans and how classroom instruction is monitored. Mr. Sharp described the process used for evaluating teachers through formal and informal observations and described the follow-up that occurs after an observation. A sample of the data reviewed at a quarterly data presentation was provided. Mr. Sharp described the type of information that was provided in the data review and he explained the system used to color code the data to identify trends and identify students in need of additional instructional support. Ms. Barbosa described the process for identifying students to receive Reading intervention, the types of lessons provided, and the types of progress monitoring that occurs. Mr. Hungerford described a typical tutoring lesson provided to students identified in need of tutoring based on the data review. Agendas and sign-in sheets for weekly professional development were provided. Appendix B contains the summary of the materials/items referenced in the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress for ECDC and whether the evidence was confirmed as sufficient during the site visit.

Staff has determined, through an evaluation of the submission, including information and documentation collected at the site visit, that the charter holder demonstrated sufficient progress toward meeting the Board's academic performance expectations.

#### Governance Structure:

The charter holder's corporate board consists of Armando Ruiz, Bertha Gutierrez, Frances Castillo, Adrian Ruiz, and Monica Rivera, which is consistent with the information listed with the Arizona Corporation Commission. The organizational structure for the board is described as the corporate board providing oversight of an administrative team. The new charter will be held by the same corporate board. As a result, the same organizational structure will be in place to provide oversight of the new charter.

#### Board Options

1. Approve the Transfer Application for Espiritu Community Development Corp. Staff recommends the following language provided for consideration: I move to approve the request for transfer of Esperanza Montessori Academy and Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy from the current K-12 charter held by Espiritu Community

Development Corp. to a new charter held by Espiritu Community Development Corp. to operate Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy and serving grades K-6. As a condition of approval, the current contract for Espiritu Community Development Corp. that is currently approved to serve grades K-12, will be amended to serve grades 7-12 pursuant to the transfer of the school sites serving grades K-6 to the new charter.

2. Deny the Transfer Application for Espiritu Community Development Corp. (ECDC). The following language is provided for consideration: I move to deny the request for transfer of Esperanza Montessori Academy and Reyes Maria Ruiz Leadership Academy from the current charter to a new charter for the following reasons:
  - o Failure to meet or demonstrate sufficient progress toward the Board's academic performance expectations when it failed to (Board member must specify reasons the Board found during its consideration.);
  - o Other specific reasons the Board may have found during its consideration including...

# APPENDIX A

## Demonstration of Sufficient Progress

A self-analysis was conducted covering Espiritu Community Development Corp.'s operations and the academic achievement of students as a result of its operations. According to the latest "Academic Performance Rating" during fiscal year 2012, one of three schools Esperanza Montessori Academy which serves grades K-3, did "Not Meet" the minimum acceptable academic standard according to the State Board for Charter Schools new Academic Framework. According to the "Academic Performance Rating" there were 5 specific areas that either Did Not Meet or Fell Far Below the standard: Overall Student Growth Percentile in Math; Student Growth Percentile for Bottom 25% in Math; Percent Passing of All Students in Math; Percent Passing of All Students Reading; and Composite School Comparison in Reading. In response to these findings we here at Espiritu have outlined a detailed description of current and future strategies and action steps that demonstrates a plan for maintaining sufficient progress allowing us to meet academic performance expectations going forward. In the attempt to raise the academic achievement of Esperanza Montessori Academy so that it meets or exceeds performance expectations for each deficient measure; school leaders, in conjunction with teachers, have been implementing strategies and action steps in *Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment s, and Professional Development* as a means to accomplish this task. The following is an outlined narrative describing each deficient measure and the school's analysis and response to the deficiencies in the areas of *Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments, and Professional Development* for Esperanza Montessori Academy.

### *J. Overall Student Growth Percentile in Math*

According to the Academic Performance Rating for FY12, the Math Median Percentile Rank of full academic year students was 43. This information is of course reflective of Esperanza Montessori Academy's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students as they are the only students who are tested on AJMS. Although this measure was deemed, not meeting the standard, it was still considered "Typical Math Median Growth" by the Arizona Charter School Association. Additionally, the percentile rank for students has sustained an upward growth trend in math over the last three years, as evidenced by *Table 1*. The substantial upward trend in growth demonstrates excellent indicators for EMA. The goal remains; however, to achieve "High Math Median Growth" and that goal has not yet been attained. In order to accomplish this, certain steps have been taken to ensure this measure is up to par in the future.

Esperanza Montessori Academy monitors and adjusts the curriculum according to internal needs assessments, federal, and state requirements. As determined in Espiritu's charter renewal in 2010, a key contributing factor to overall underperformance was due to an incomplete research based, standards aligned curriculum for Math. At the end of 2010, which coincided with the lowest point in Math Median Growth, over \$100,000 was invested in new curriculum and text books in accordance with the approved Performance Management Plan. The curriculum of "Saxon Mathematics" was a researched-based, standards aligned curriculum. In addition the "Buckle Down" AIMS Preparation supplemental materials were purchased to help instructors properly prepare the students for AIMS. Although the new curriculum has produced sustained increases in overall median growth, due to a low starting point. Saxon Mathematics curriculum is consistently reviewed by teachers, mentor teachers, and school leaders. Over the course of the evaluations it has been determined there was a need for increased rigor. As a result of the reviews, a change was made from the "worksheet" version of the curriculum to the "textbook." According to the company and additional research, the textbook increases the level of difficulty and rigor for students. The adjustments were made in August 2012, which have resulted an increase in math benchmark scores compared to other years as demonstrated in *Table 1*.

The second action step relates to monitoring the integration of the appropriate Math standards into teacher's instruction. The first step to ensure instructional fidelity to the standards is by monitoring instructor lesson plans. Lesson plans are submitted and reviewed on a weekly basis to ensure that the correct math standards and concepts are being introduced inside the classroom. Additionally, in accordance with the new Teacher Evaluation Framework, a minimum of two formal evaluations are conducted during the year, which includes classroom observations as part of the overall performance determination. During the post-evaluation with the instructor, the school leader reviews specific items including instructional practices, lesson plans, and student achievement data. Instructional accountability is an enormous piece of the puzzle to increasing student growth in Math. In addition to instructional accountability, data review teams made up of mentor teachers and administration review previous standards based assessments to identify trends and determine those specific concepts where students historically do not meet or show minimal or no growth from one year to the next. For example, to improve overall student growth in math, administration and mentor teachers conducted an analysis of the past three years AIMS results and identified the following Standards and Concepts where students as a whole struggled with comprehending - S1C3; S2C2&3; S4C4; S5C2 as seen in Graph 2. The Data Review team determined the non-mastery of the following standards/concepts was related to the curriculum and teacher performance. Thus, addendums to pacing calendars and curriculum maps were added to reflect added emphasis on these particular Standards and Concepts.

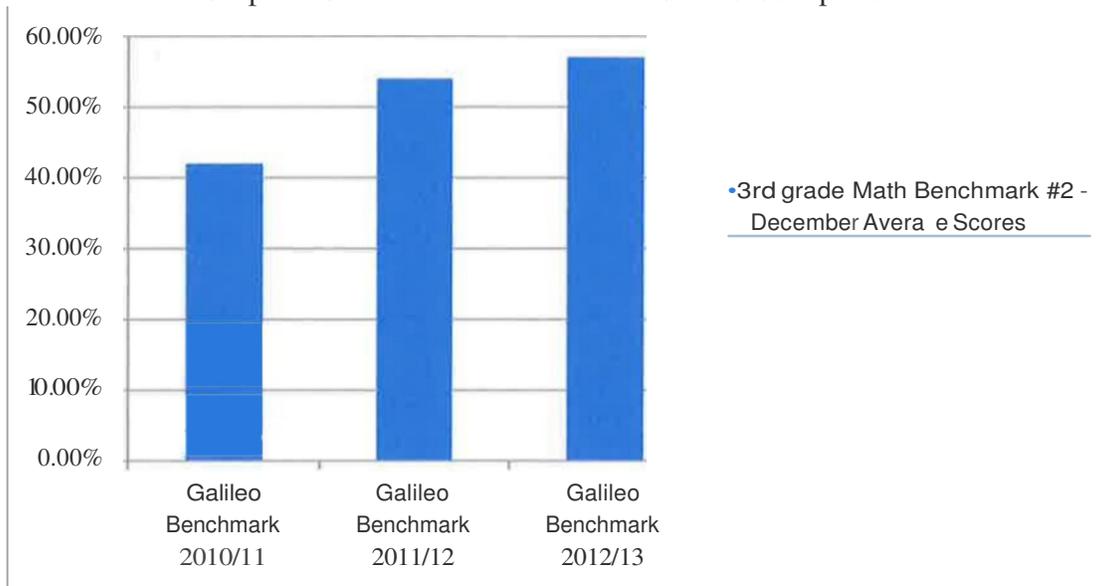
In addition to the curriculum and instruction, constant monitoring and assessing of students is essential to ensuring increases in overall math growth. In order to do this, Esperanza Montessori Academy has also invested in the ATr-Online Galileo assessment software. The program has allowed for students, parents, teachers, and school leaders the ability to monitor weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly math growth of students in specific AIMS and Common Core standards. It has provided teachers with formative assessments from which they can monitor their students, benchmark assessments to monitor students on a quarterly basis, and summative assessments to measure overall yearly progress. In order to create an environment of accountability, students are formally assessed seven times a year to demonstrate academic growth and mastery of all standards. Based on the data adjustments to instruction are made so that the learning is targeted. Instructors formally present their data and instructional strategies on a quarterly basis to a panel consisting of parents, mentor teachers and school leaders to monitor progress and effectiveness. The overall system of assessing, disaggregating and interpreting the resulting data, developing coherent instructional strategies, adjusting instruction, and the subsequent presentations reinforces the accountability of continual growth of student performance, in this particular case, math.

In order for the above to function appropriately, a supportive system of meaningful professional development is needed. As part of instructors' requirement to present their student progress and instructional implementation, it allows for opportunities to provide classroom instructors ongoing formation and direction regarding strategies to improve student growth based on that teacher's specific need. Strategies are provided through various means including School Leaders Mentor Teachers, Professional Learning Community meetings, formal professional development sessions provided by the Arizona Department of Education and through the Quality Schools partnership that has been formulated with the Arizona Charter School Association over the last 2 years. Various instructor learning opportunities have been held that have centered on improving student growth in math. The sessions are specifically focused so that the identified, historically weak math standards such as Estimation, Probability, Systematic Listing and Counting, Measurement, Logic, Reasoning, and Proofs can be addressed. From here student math achievement can be evaluated to verify the effectiveness of the professional development. The entire process has been constructed as such so that it is a continuous and on-going reflection to achieve the math growth that is desired.

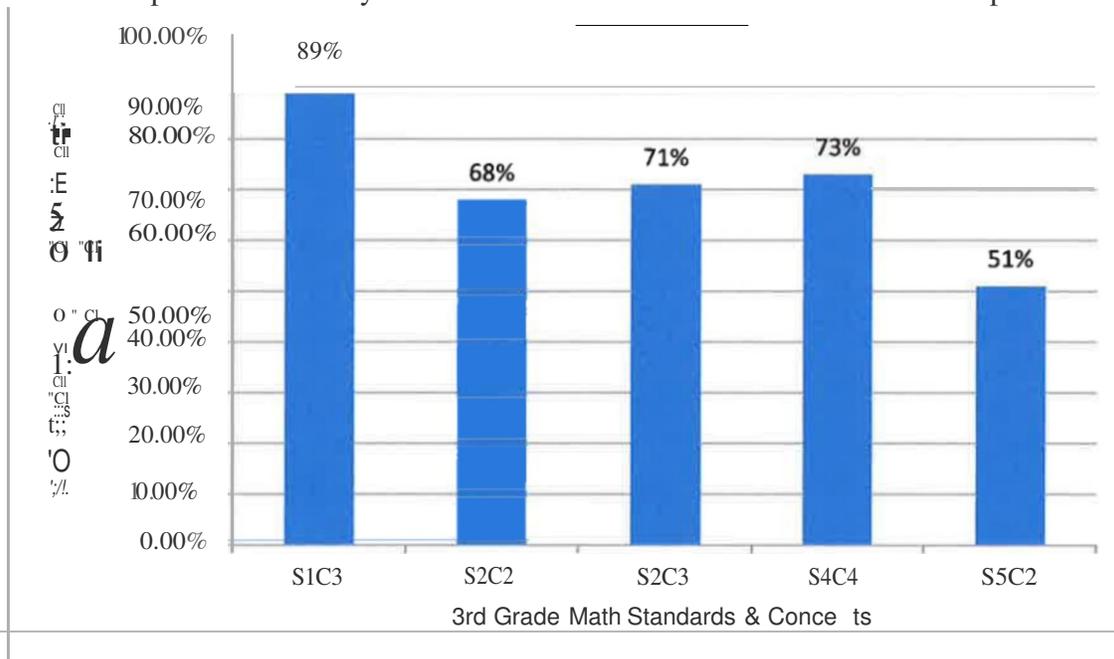
Table 1-3 Year Overall Math Median Growth

<b>Esperanza Montessori Academy</b>			
Year	2010	2011	2012
Median Growth	22	39	43

Graph 1-3Year Math Benchmark Scores Comparison



Graph 2 -Historically Un met 3n1 Grade AIMS Standards and Concept



## *2. Student Growth Percentile for Bottom 25% in Math*

As mentioned in the above section, overall student growth did not meet the standard; a large contributing factor was the extremely low growth of the identified Bottom 25% of students. This measure was by far the most deficient of all as it Fell Far Below the minimum requirements. According to the Academic Performance Rating for FY12, the Math Median Percentile Rank of identified Bottom 25% students was 29.5; which would be considered 'Low Math Median Growth'. Due to having only one year's worth of data, provided by the Arizona Department of Education, measuring the growth of Bottom 25% students for grades K-3, it is difficult to ascertain whether there has been an upward or downward trend for this measure but what can be established is that there is a low baseline that needs to be improved. To rectify this issue, certain actions have been taken to ensure this measure meets the standard in the future. Since the inception of the new A-F School Accountability Framework, Esperanza Montessori Academy has placed a heavy emphasis on the growth of Bottom 25% students. Before the new accountability framework, the school determined its low achieving students by monitoring the results of the internal benchmark assessments. Now, because ADE provides the identified students, it allows teachers and school leaders to pinpoint and focus on those struggling students who require more individualized attention, specific interventions and detailed strategies so that they can achieve grade level status.

As discussed in the Overall Math Growth section of this narrative, having access to the Saxon Math researched based curriculum should help improve Bottom 25% student growth in math. Having had the ability to map the curriculum to the standards and provide pacing guides for the teachers has allowed for a more structured approach to instruction. In addition, providing and implementing supplemental curriculum such as math workbooks and math manipulatives should further help increase student achievement. Constant and consistent evaluation of the curriculum utilized by the team of school leaders and teachers has been deemed necessary to keep up with the constant change in student needs. For example, during a recent review it had been identified that math vocabulary, and vocabulary as a whole, was a critical area of concern for "Bottom 25%" math students, thus changes were implemented to some of the supplemental curriculum resources provided. There was a change made in the phonics program utilized to assist with the vocabulary deficiency, and it also caused adjustments to the instructor's approach to introduce more math vocabulary so that the needs of the students are being met thereby increasing "Bottom 25%" growth in math.

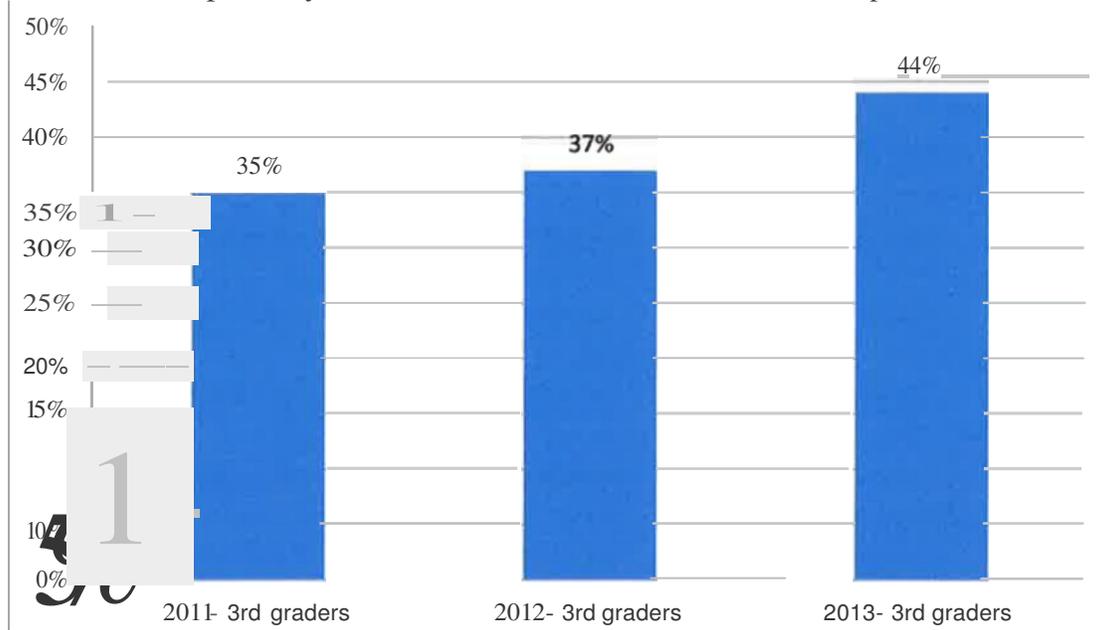
Most of the strategies utilized to monitor the implementation of the standards into instruction for "Overall Student Growth" apply to the area of "Bottom 25% Growth". Lesson plans are monitored, observations and evaluations are completed, and reviews are done to ensure that historically unmet standards are being reinforced in the classroom; however, additional steps have been taken for this special group of students. Having already been identified as Bottom 25% students, it is evident that they have particular needs and need extra interventions. With that being said an analysis is conducted after each assessment to identify the particular standards they have yet to master; this is done on an ongoing basis. Not only do instructors differentiate their instruction to meet the needs in the general classroom, those designated as Bottom 25% are also enrolled in additional tutoring programs during and outside the normal school day. After a review by the data team it was determined that the biggest need was additional and individualized instruction time to get the students on grade level. This has now been built into the Esperanza Montessori Academy program of instruction as a requirement. The first tutoring program is reading focused and is a daily forty-five minute program guided by the Reading Interventionist. Students are grouped by grade and ability and a called for intervention on a daily basis. The second tutoring program is an instructor led

program, held after school from 3:00pm to 4:00pm, is focused on either reading or math depending on student needs.

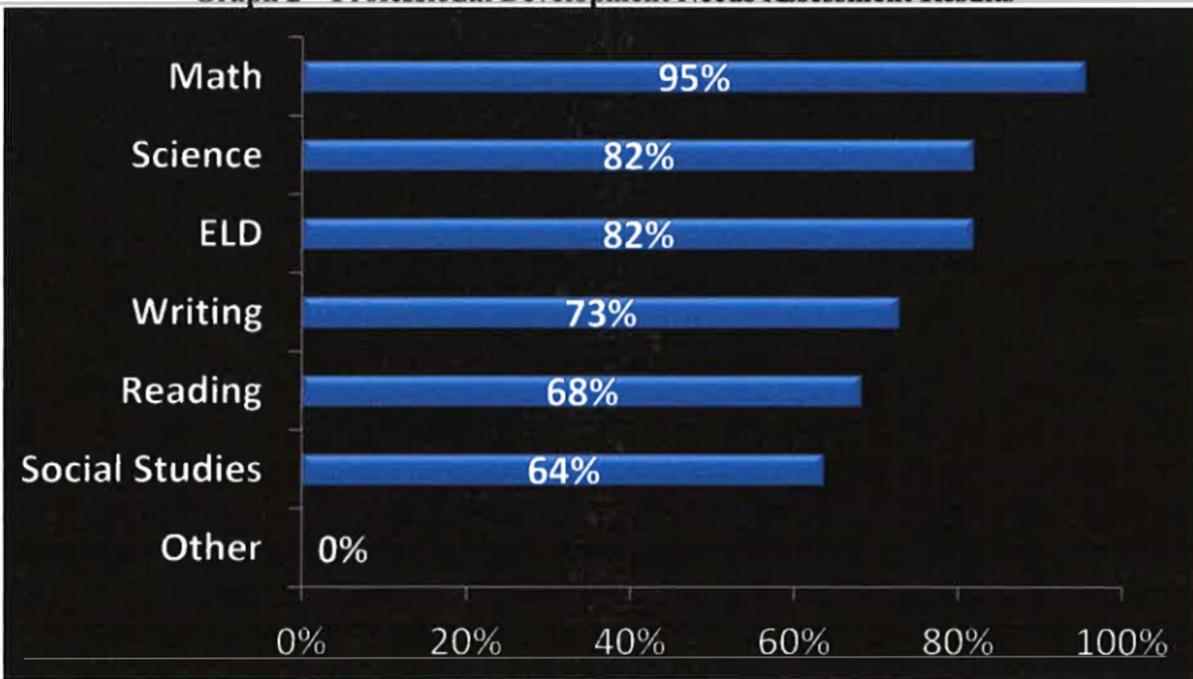
In order to successfully monitor the implementation of the standards; the process has to be married to a system of assessment. The DIBELS Progress Monitoring assessment is used for the pull-out reading program, but for the purposes of boosting Bottom 25% growth in math, ATI Galileo is utilized. In order for the implementation of the standards to be effective and the additional tutoring programs to work, instructors constantly utilize and refer back to their formative and summative assessments to identify math concepts that are not met. In the reading pull-out program, instructors and school leaders identified key math vocabulary words that were seen frequently in the textbook, on internal assessments, and on AIMS practice exams and were in turn utilized as guided practice to improve math achievement. For the instructor led tutoring program, instructors utilize supplemental material to modify their tutoring in accordance with the missing concepts. This process of assessment and reinforcement in the classroom is on-going throughout the year in order to achieve the desired results.

The last component necessary to successfully improve student growth for Bottom 25% students is by providing instructors with the necessary tools to be successful through professional development. By ADE identifying Bottom 25% students, not only has it allowed EMA to better strategically identify students who need extra services, but it has allowed for targeting key areas of Professional Development as well. Professional Development needs to be targeted to the needs of instructors so that it can have a direct impact on student achievement. Over the past three years various Professional Development opportunities have been provided for instructors to help increase student math achievement such as Tier-3 interventions and accommodations; using word illustrations, addressing learning styles, scaffolding, the use of manipulative materials, and the use of graphic organizers. With growth in math being the largest deficiency for EMA, it was no surprise that while reviewing the results, as seen on Graph 2, of the Professional Development Needs Assessment that was conducted at the beginning of the year showed that Math was the single greatest need, at an overwhelming 95% response rate. The data collected from the Needs Assessment and 2012 AIMS results signify that the needs are aligned. Due to this being an area of high need, specific math strategies have been reinforced during PLC meetings, specific trainings have been requested during the Quality School sessions, and instructors have been sent to Common Core math trainings to share ideas with other faculty members. To ensure effective implementation, student math achievement will continue to be monitored to verify effectiveness. This strategy will be utilized continuously as a means to provide high effective professional development in the future.

Graph 1-3 year Third Grade Math Bottom 25% ompa rison



Graph 2 – Professional Development Needs Assessment Results



### **3. Percent Passing of All Students in Math**

In addition to the difficulties meeting the standard in Overall and Bottom 25% Growth in Math, Percent Passing of all students in math was also a measure that did not meet the standard. Although the measure was not met, 2012 was the first year in which the AMO proficiency percentage goal was met· 67% being the proficiency rate achieved and 72% being the AMO goal . It has been a difficult task to place the students in a position to where they can meet and exceed the standard, and the work is not yet complete. To accomplish the goal over the past four years Esperanza Montessori Academy has gone to great lengths to rigorously and vigorously implement strategies to monitor pacing guides, curriculum maps, teaching standards, internal assessments, AIMS results, and Professional Development. During this time there has been an overall explicit culture shift to the collecting, understanding, and utilization of data as part of the overall teaching culture to improve proficiency in math and reading. Throughout this transformation similar strategies described and used in "Student Growth" have been used to help increase "Math Proficiency" with the addition of a few other strategies to help achieve this goal.

Esperanza Montessori Academy has engaged in the continuous evaluation and adjustment of its curriculum as internal needs have arisen as well changes in education. Two years ago, the EMA curriculum team evaluated the curriculum and revised the Pacing Guides and Curriculum Maps for grades K-3 to reflect the upcoming Common Core Math Standards with the expectancy that adding a higher level of rigor in the lower grades would better prepare for the future. The curriculum team also consistently reviews those instructional items that require enhancing outside of EMA's core curriculum and supplementing through various means to add them into the learning process. Whether through purchasing additional materials such as "Math 4 Today" as bell work or researching educational websites such as "BrainPop – Math", which have shown to increase overall student engagement. The curriculum team likewise evaluated and determined the need to add extra supplemental curriculum in order to add a higher level of vocabulary and reading comprehension. Due to the majority of the math concepts not met by students revolved around low proficiency levels in the English language and given the high number of word problems on State Assessments it was deemed that timely, measurable , and objective programs and corresponding assessments were needed. The programs : Spaulding, Readers Theaters, Mondo's Pathway of Writing, and ELL Assessment by rugby, are language-based; however, add support to success in the area of mathematics. As can be seen in Graph 1, over the course of time as adjustments to curriculum have been made and additional resources have been acquired, math proficiency levels have taken dramatic steps forward.

Through evaluation from the team, revisions were also evaluated in needed areas of implementation of math standards into daily instruction. As mentioned previously, school leaders follow the system of lesson plan reviews, classroom observations, and detailed evaluations to monitor the implementation. Through this process is where it was discovered that the need for instructional improvement, specifically geared towards the delivery of instruction in order to improve academic success. The first area was the recognition of multiple learning styles, mainly adding additional visual and hands on components such as the utilization of interactive technology (Mimio Boards and Writing Pads), interactive websites, and games that further engage students in the learning process. By adding the video component to learning, a greater majority of students have become more attentive. In addition to the visual component, the use of manipulative activities in center based learning groups has proved helpful for the tactile learners. This also included the 'Math Calendar' lessons which incorporate rate reasoning, logic, and patterns into the daily lessons which are seen

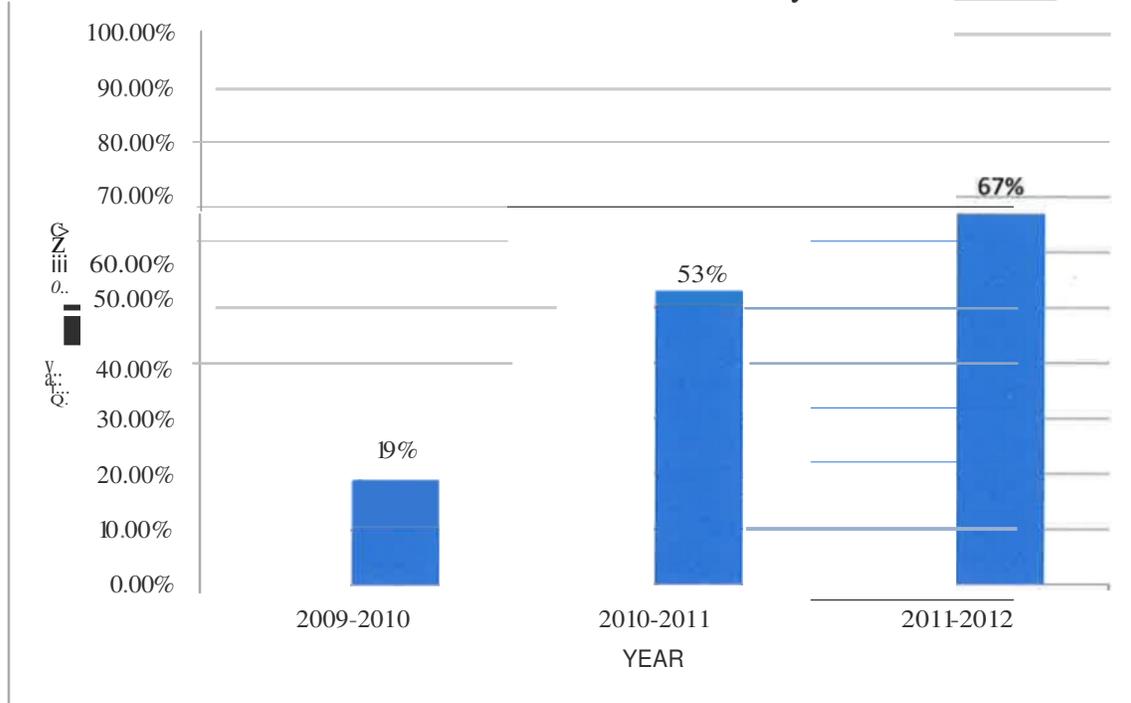
throughout the Stanford 10 and AIMS Assessments. Given additional time and continued implementation of best practices, percent passing levels should be at the appropriate levels in the near future.

In addition to improvements in curriculum and instruction there have been impactful changes in assessing and monitoring students' math progress in conjunction with the implementation of the standards. Esperanza Montessori Academy sees these two action steps as intertwined. School leaders continuously monitor instruction and implementation of the standards, and this inevitably increases student performance because teachers focus more on analyzing each student's needs. By monitoring each student's math proficiency gains, instructors are able to better equip themselves with the correct objectives in which to focus. In turn, by focusing on the correct objectives and raising math performance levels, instructors ultimately receive higher evaluation ratings. The most impactful action step EMA took was the purchase of ATI-Online Galileo. This internal assessment data-base allows teachers, parents, and school leaders to constantly monitor each student's math progress and pass/fail rate. Instructors create specific math class-quizzes and exams with the online assessment builder provided by ATI-Online. Instructor created math class-quizzes and exams are based on currently taught Arizona State Performance Objectives. Based on the results of the ATI-Online Galileo class quizzes and tests (formative assessments) instructors and school leaders monitor and adjust instruction based on each student's performance outcomes. Graph 2 depicts the comparison between this year's 1st and 2nd benchmark assessment. The graph highlights improvement in 3 of the 5 standards tested and shows improvement needs to be made on standards 4 and 5 to increase overall math proficiency. Instructors utilize data extracts such as these on a continual basis to adjust instruction to meet the academic needs of students. Once these action steps have been taken school leaders use the resulting data to monitor the passing rate of each student and evaluate what additional action steps need to be taken to ensure academic success.

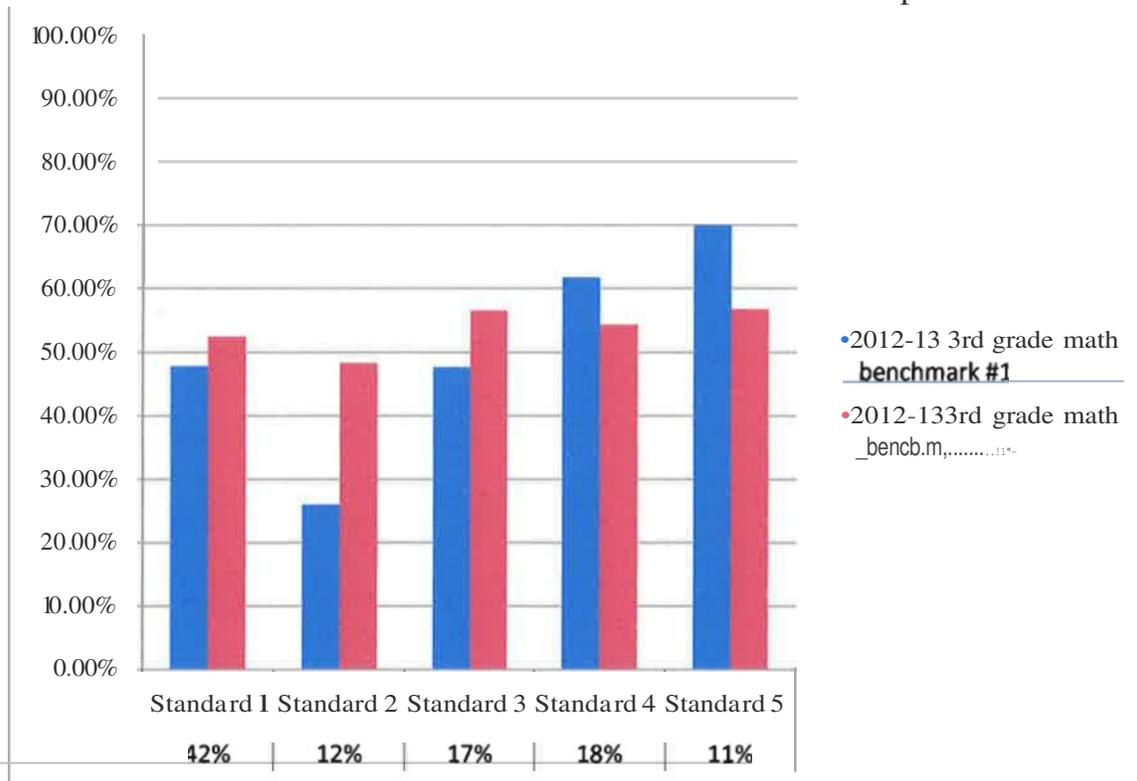
Not only do instructors continue to monitor the progress of students, but it is important that they too receive the appropriate professional development and monitoring, to have an ultimate impact on student math achievement. With math being a high area of need for instructors, one of the most impactful mathematics professional developments that have been held on an ongoing basis is "Vertical Curricular and Instructional Assessing". Vertical Curricular and Instructional Assessing involves the entire math department from Kindergarten to 12th grade. On an annual basis math instructors convene and discuss 'strategies' on which math standards should be taught when and what standards and or concepts students are missing when they arrive in the next grade. This open dialogue allows teachers to identify areas of concern and adjust instruction accordingly. K-12 math instructors meet on an annual basis, but in order to ensure there is adequate follow up and implementation, on a weekly basis K-3 instructor's meet in their smaller established Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) to reflect and develop strategies to improve student achievement. School leaders frequently participate during these meeting sessions to monitor the effectiveness of the meetings and to ensure best practices and successful strategies are being shared. This system has proven to be successful in increasing math proficiency given that its implementation coincides with the beginning of the upward trend in math proficiency in Graph 1. Continual review and adjustments to this particular professional development system will be made to ensure continued student math **success**

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GRAPH 1-3 Year Math AIMS Proficiency Results



GRAPH 2 -3rd Grade Math Benchmark Standards Comparison



#### *4. Percent Passing of All Students in Reading*

Esperanza Montessori did also not meet the standards for Percent Passing of All Students in Reading. Although the measure was not met in 2012, as can be seen in Graph 1, there has been a significant increase in overall proficiency since the beginning of 2010 as passing rates have risen from 26% to 67%. The proficiency rates have plateaued over the last two years but serious efforts are being undertaken and have produced hidden results as well. In 2011 only 1 third grade student Exceeded the AIMS exam as compared to 2012 when 10 students Exceeded the standard. Thus, even though proficiency rates have stagnated a bit, there are still tremendous gains that are occurring at Esperanza Montessori Academy. Many essential factors are necessary if the EMA is to achieve the success it strives for; a thorough analysis and interpretation of data, curriculum systems, integration of the standards, reliable assessment of students, and providing the necessary training for instructors. This three year movement has required critical and innovative thinking and many best practices that have been used to increase math passing rates have also been implemented to improve reading proficiency with adjustments to complement the content differences.

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Esperanza Montessori Academy is continuously evaluating and adjusting its reading curriculum as deemed necessary by data analysis, evaluation, and through a process of collective decision making. Over the past three years Esperanza Montessori Academy has rigorously monitored, evaluated and adjusted 3rd grade teaching standards, pacing guides, curriculum maps, AIMS results, and internal benchmarks assessment. During this time, instructors of Esperanza Montessori Academy have been immersed in the data analysis of internal assessments, past AIMS concepts that students have performed poorly on, and day to day classwork. Not only has this been done to reflect the upcoming shift to the Common Core Standards, but to prepare students, faculty and parents of the new "Move On When Reading" initiative. In conjunction with the adoption of a rigorous culture of data analysis, the school community has come to embrace the implementation of the state's "Move On When Reading" initiative as a means to push students to further heights. This new law will help ensure students receive the instruction they need to develop their skills in reading in hopes that it creates greater academic success in later grades. This initiative has helped highlight areas that need further enhancing through supplemental means so students are adequately prepared for the new initiative. School leaders collaboratively decided that a new phonics program would be needed to increase reading vocabulary and comprehension as a means to increase proficiency. Supplemental curriculum, such as leveled readers, was needed to comprehensively expose students to a culture of reading. The Spalding program was purchased and instructors were sent to week's long intensive training to be adequately prepared. After analysis of consistently non-mastered standards, S1C1, S1C4, S1C6 were mastered by only 35% of students, the curriculum team collaborated to determine programs such as Readers Theatre and Mondo are Pathway of Writing and complemented by interactive technology are methods to increase reading proficiency. As seen in Graph 1, students should continue to see gains in overall proficiency so that the standards can be met. EMA has demonstrated it has a systemic method for evaluating and adjusting, when necessary, the curriculum and fostering positive student outcomes.

In order to improve proficiency rates in reading, a comprehensive system for integrating the standards into instruction is essential. School leaders have the primary responsibility of being vigilant that this is taking place. Our instruction requires using strategic lesson plans with a backwards standards-based approach. Our pacing calendars help the teacher to develop good objectives based on Bloom's Taxonomy learning verbs. Teachers work with the Individual Learning Plan, to create effective lessons and activities. We ensure fidelity on a consistent basis through constant observation

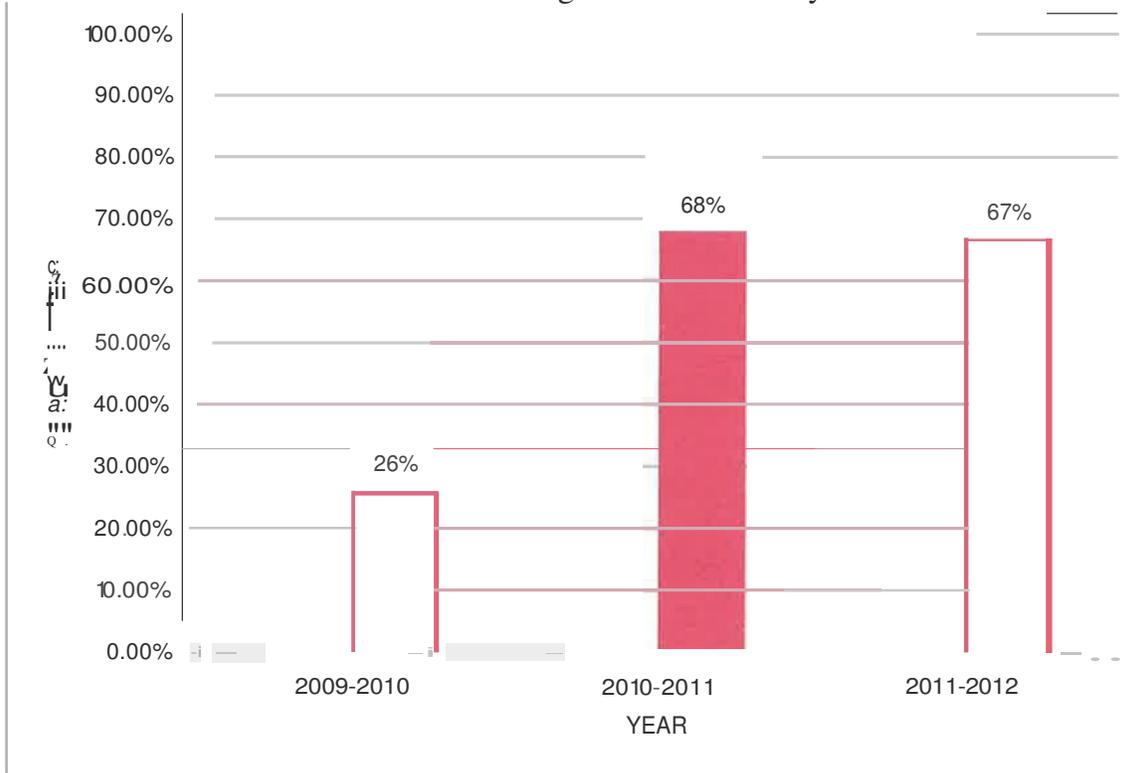
by means of walkthroughs, formal observations, ensuring lesson plans are submitted and subsequently reviewing them, and most importantly providing timely and valuable feedback. A system of heavy accountability to these methods has been established at Espiritu CDC, and these systems have proven to work given the increased proficiency rates over time as seen in Graph 1, but success is a team effort that requires effort on all sides.

We assess and evaluate in order to collect & use data to drive instruction. This ensures that learning is consistently monitored and assessed. Teacher and student data is monitored from the benchmark, formative, summative, and progress monitoring results. It provides information to the teacher on student progress in the standards, which drives instructional decisions. This method of assessment aligns instruction to our Curriculum Mapping. In addition, ATI-Online Galileo teachers develop class-quizzes and tests based on core standards that are taught for the correlated weeks. Based on the results of the ATI-Online Galileo formative assessments, teachers and school leaders monitor and adjust instruction based on performance outcomes. Students who show minimal progress are enrolled in three separate tutoring programs. The first tutoring program is held in EMA's Reading Interventionist's room on a daily basis for forty-five minutes per day with one reading specialist and two instructional aids. The 45 minute Reading Program is aimed to reteach the following skills; phonics skills, reading comprehension, strategies to comprehend text, and the elements of literature. The second tutoring program is the Teacher-Tutoring program held after school. Teachers identify reading concepts that are not met, according to our internal assessments and teacher created assessments, and tutor twice a week in accordance with these missing concepts. Teachers have also identified key reading vocabulary words that are seen frequently in the textbook, on internal assessments, and as well as on AIMS practice test which are then given to students on a quarterly basis. The third program is an ELL tutoring pull out program provided by a tutoring vendor on our campus. Due to EMA's high ELL population (63.9%) extra reading tutoring is seen as a key component for academic success. In addition to tutoring EMA's leadership team values not only educating its students but its teachers as well.

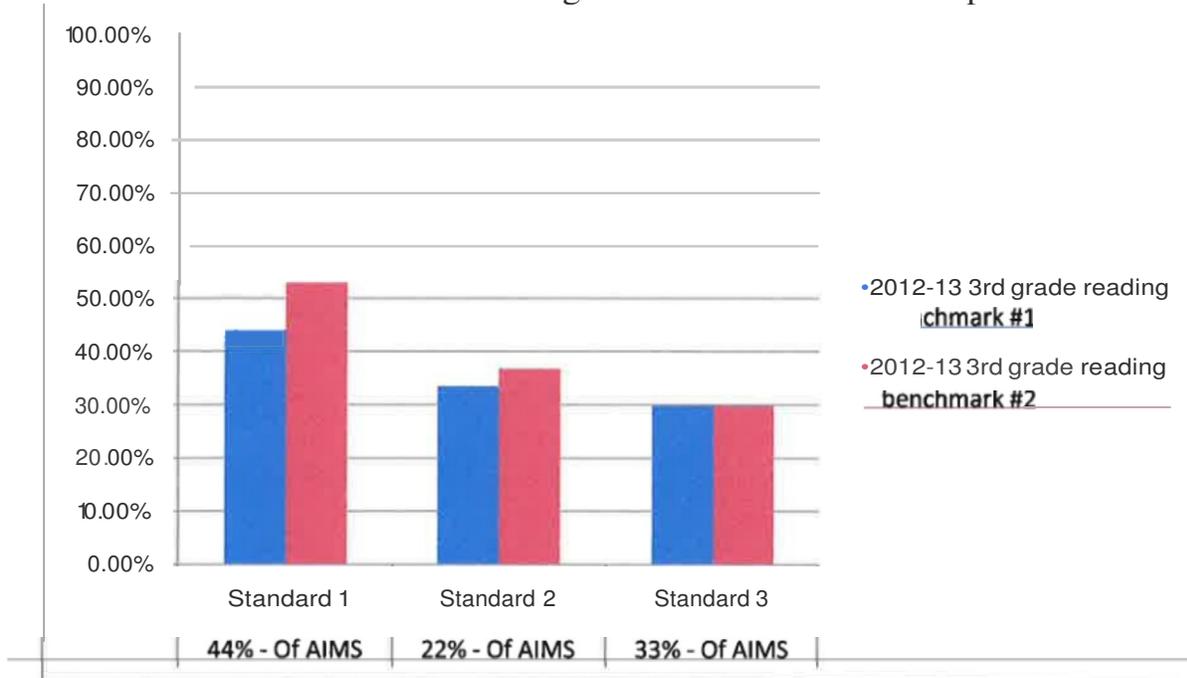
After assessing teacher needs, we provide meaningful Professional Development (PD). Our PD is delivered through on-going mentoring, small group teams, coaching, and on-going training. As they grow in expertise, they deliver high-quality and meaningful instruction. It is very important that all teachers are using sound strategies to accomplish each student's learning goals. Specific competencies must be mastered in order for teachers to work effectively with students in the classroom. Over the past three years Professional Development opportunities have been supplied for teachers such as Tier-3 interventions and accommodations; (Using word illustrations, Addressing learning styles scaffolding, the use of manipulative, the use of graphic organizers, Mimio-Smart Board Technology, and having students explain reasoning behind correct/incorrect responses). Not only have these PD's been an integral part of student success but also the collaboration of vertical and horizontal teacher planning. EMA utilizes Wednesdays as early release day (8:00am – 1:30pm) for students. This creates time in the middle of the week for teachers to plan together, analyze data together, and reflect on what works as a vertical and horizontal team.

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GRAPH 1-3Year Reading AIMS Proficiency Results



GRAPH 2-3rd Grade Reading Benchmark Standards Comparison



### *5. Composite School Comparison in Reading*

Throughout the past 3 years EMA has rigorously sought out new methodologies and programs from "like" schools that have a proven track record of success. It has been identified that on an overall school comparison based on those serving similar populations to ours, there is a deficiency in the Reading measure. Although it was deficient, the situation was not dire as it came in just below the adequate level at -1.8. The high percentage of FRL, at a level of 100% in 2011 & 2012, and ELL students make a large contributing factor to the composite school comparison measure. Several items have been undertaken to help improve this reading deficiency.

Upon researching high performing "like schools" and identifying what makes them successful with the components we possess, the implementation of a few curriculum changes were undertaken over the past three years. The first adjustment was a shift in 2010 from the "Whole Language" reading approach to "Phonics" based reading approach. It was identified that the unique population that is served does not possess the necessary foundational skills to utilize a Whole language approach, necessitating an investment in the "Action Reading" phonics program. This was done in conjunction with the implementation of a daily scheduled pull-out reading, phonics based program led by a Reading Specialist who could provide individualized instruction to struggling readers. Although phonics proved to be a successful approach, the "Action Reading" program had difficulty providing reading and writing fundamentals. This spurred the adoption of the Spalding curriculum in classroom instruction for grades K-1 as students lacked the necessary fundamentals. This gradual implementation approach of the Spalding Method, which is aligned to the Common Core Standards, will adequately prepare both subgroups of ELL and FRL students to achieve the appropriate levels of reading proficiency. With continual observation of the instructional material, defined implementation, and resulting progress based on student data, a determination by the data team will be made as to the implementation across the school in 2014. The subgroup of ELL students have usually struggled to achieve proficiency spurring an additional ELL Pull-Out Program in 2011-2012 to the daily schedule. This decision was based on EMA's large ELL and FEP population; 63.9% of the total population in 2012 was classified ELL or FEP. The ELL Pull-Out Program works directly with the ELL students who need additional hours of instruction with the English language. The time allocation for this service is 45 extra minutes per day, this is not in conjunction with the 4 hour ELL block mandated by the State of Arizona. Continuous data analysis, evaluation, and curriculum research has also led to the adoption of ELL Assessment by Rigby, Readers Theaters, Phonics Steps Towards Reading Success, and Mondo's Pathway of Writing. The adoptions of these key curricular programs are a direct result of collaborative team research and furthermore have shown to improve student achievement of both subgroups as depicted in Graphs 1 and 2.

In addition to the system of creating, implementing evaluating and revising the curriculum, monitoring the integration of the standards into instruction is also important to achieving composite comparison reading results. As proficiency and new ideas hit the proverbial wall, it is important to continually tweak and adjust the system to get over difficult humps. As described in previous narratives, classrooms are continuously observed and evaluated, students are assessed based on the standards on an on-going basis, and both are pushed to exert maximum energy. The system also allows for analysis and feedback so as to not get stuck at a particular level. As can be seen in Graphs 1 and 2, although both subgroups have witnessed drastic improvement in reading proficiency over the past 3 years; the ELL population has experienced continuous improvement where FRL students plateaued between 2011 and 2012. Witnessing this, a new approach was adopted for the implementation and monitoring of the standards. The method taken was to eliminate the model of self-contained classrooms and set up distinct classrooms based on subject matter with specialized

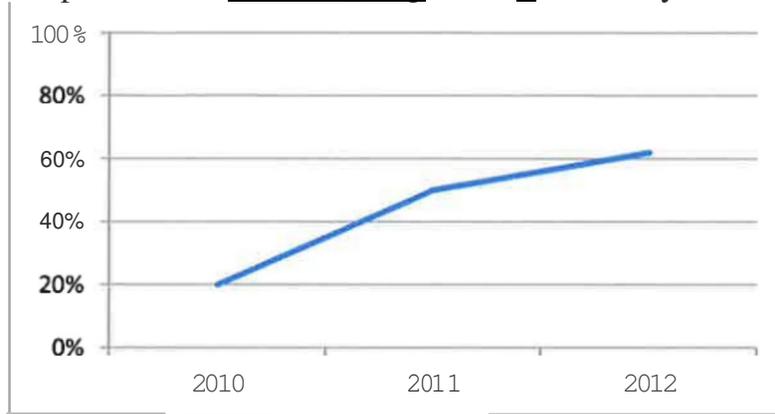
instructors in the areas of math/science & reading/social studies. This was done based on the findings through surveys that teachers generally are more academically knowledgeable in one subject area over another, teachers generally have a greater passion for a particular subject, and that it might assist with classroom management through sustained engagement and stimulated learning. This has allowed for additional preparation time, greater detailed lesson planning, simpler evaluation of these plans, focused classroom observations and evaluations, and most importantly allows for greater data analysis. This focused approach to the implementation and monitoring of the standards should allow for greater gains in reading. If adjustments are required they will be made as we have an established system; however, it is one that is not so rigid it squashes innovation, but is rather flexible to help meet student needs in reading.

Assessment of students is an extremely important means to improving the reading composite comparison deficiency. ATI OaJileo, DIBELS progress monitoring, and instructor created formative and summative assessments are the primary tools utilized to assess students. When assessing the various subgroups utilizing DIBELS, in order to ensure the reliability of the data, the Reading Specialist with the assistance of a qualified paraprofessional undertake this responsibility. This is essentially the entire school since the majority of students are classified as ELL and/or FRL. According to the latest DIBELS Benchmark assessment, 60% of students have already mastered reading fluency. This information is important for instructors as it allows them to adjust their instruction in a timely manner. By pooling multiple sources of data, whether it is through DIBELS, Galileo, instructor created assessments, it permits the action of targeted instruction. The teacher essentially is like a physician wherein they can provide a distinct remedy for what ill the student, in this particular case, for the purposes of boosting reading achievement. All of this reverts back to fostering a system and environment of intense accountability for the purposes of increasing reading achievement across the board.

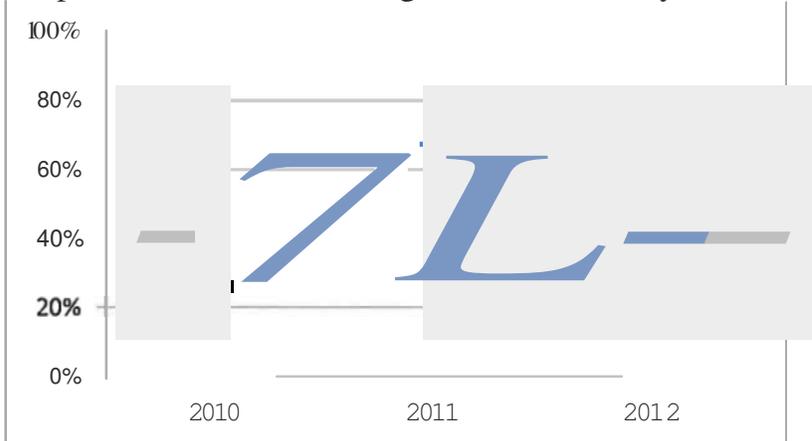
In order to improve the reading scores in comparison with schools who serve similar students is through a solid foundation of professional development. School leaders and mentor teachers have had the opportunity to interview and "pick the brain" of a wide variety of other school leaders in and out of the valley to better target areas of professional development. Furthermore EMA school leaders and mentor teachers have also collaborated with the Arizona Charter School Association to receive professional development identifying those best practices that have proven effective in other schools with similar demographics to ours, and the strategies have been implemented from such collaboration. Through the results of the PD Needs Assessment and given the student population served, ELD was an area of high interest as indicated on Graph 3. Providing effective reading strategies is crucial to boosting overall proficiency for our student demographic. By conducting the needs assessment and by continuous review of reading achievement data, it allows professional development to be molded into meaningful and insightful sessions. Perhaps the most insightful and influential source has been the opportunity for school leaders and mentor teachers to be introduced to the "Beat the Odds" initiative and framework of best practices that have been effective for other schools with similar demographics. This has been a profound influence on the turn-around in reading that has been embarked on over the course of 3 years, and the driving force behind the adoption of heavy data collection and analysis, increased communication and collaboration, and a more disciplined and patient approach to student achievement results. These same strategies and ideas are continually discussed year after year during staff gatherings to PLC meetings to ensure any new faculty member incorporates themselves quickly into the overall culture.

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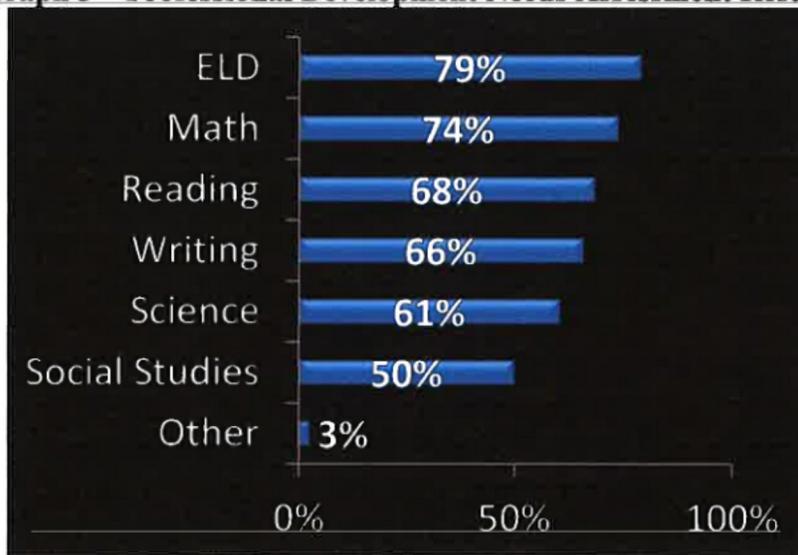
**Graph 1-3 Year ELL Reading AIMS Proficiency Results**



**Graph 2-3 Year FRL Reading AIMS Proficiency Results**



**Graph 3 – Professional Development Needs Assessment Results**



### **Subgroup SPED**

Esperanza Montessori Academy was given a Non Rating according to the 2012 Academic Performance Rating. This is attributed to only 1 Special Education student being tested on AIMS; the sample size was too small to make a determination. This does not encompass the entire population as the number of Special Education students throughout grades K-2 is much larger. Although the Special Education subgroup was not rated, it should be noted that this 1 particular student passed both the Reading and Math AIMS test last year. Although seemingly insignificant, this is actually an amazing accomplishment given that in 2010 and 2011, 0% of special education students passed the AIMS exam.

The school has utilized various means to increase the level of rigorous and vigorous service the Special Education Program provides to allow it to grow into a successful program over the past 3 years. First has been through an overall culture change through the Attitudes and Beliefs of staff-the general education and the special education instructors believe that all their students can succeed. Additionally, school personnel are committed to accepting responsibility for the learning outcomes of students with disabilities and have been prepared to receive a student with disabilities in their classroom environment. In addition EMA's special education instructors are committed to collaborative practice with the general education instructor and parents. School staff is also rigorously reviewing appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring individual student progress, including updating IEP's, communication to parents, grading, testing, and all other state compliance issues.

The second has been in changes to approaches in the school's Services, Accommodations, and Support. First and foremost services needed by the student are available (e.g., SLD, SLI, ED, health, physical occupational therapy). Accommodations have also been made when needed to the physical environment, and any special equipment needed is ensured to be adequate to meet the student's needs (e.g., building and playground facilities, learning materials, assistive devices). The key to special education students receiving the services they need is the adequate instructor to student ratios, on average it's less than or equal to 4:1. EMA also holds ongoing staff development and technical assistance, based on the needs of the school personnel.

The third and final reason Esperanza Montessori Academy has been able to establish a successful Special Education Program is through Collaboration and Instructional Methods. Special Education instructors are part of the instructional and planning teams. In addition, general education instructors, special education instructors, and others frequently collaborate on strategies that will improve student achievement and growth in both reading and math. One common practice is the repetition of in-class work during the special education pull out time. This allows students to receive additional instruction in small ratios and supplemental materials that will foster learning in a more personal environment.

It is understood that the items described above are only a few building blocks to the overall Special Education program. We will continue to add, build, and adjust so that year in and year out Esperanza Montessori Academy is providing the best Special Education services possible.

## ***7. State Accountabilit***

According to the Arizona Department of Education, Esperanza Montessori Academy has demonstrated tremendous academic gains and progress over the past three years. In the area of reading EMA has made a 48% increase in the percentage of "all students" passing, and in the area of math EMA has made a 41% increase in the percentage of "all students" passing. Although this growth is substantial EMA's mission is to continue to increase students' scores year after year. EMA's ultimate goal is to become and "A Rated" school according to the Department of Education's A-F School Evaluation Framework. Esperanza Montessori Academy plans to accomplish these goals by continually monitoring its Annual Academic Performance Rating in the areas of overall student growth percentage, growth percentile of the bottom 25% students, and percent passing in the areas of reading and math for all students and subgroups to ensure a high accountability rating. EMA is dedicated to demonstrating sufficient progress and holds all stakeholders accountable for the efforts to improve academic performance in each of the measured areas. The entire EMA staff holds themselves and the students to a high level of accountability for academic growth and achievement. EMA's teachers and school leaders are committed to accepting responsibility for the learning outcomes of all their students and have been prepared through trainings and professional development in-services to recognize and implement meaningful accommodations and modifications into the student's daily learning. In addition EMA has committed to strategically collaborate on instructional practices with vertical grades, horizontal grades, parents, and related service teachers. EMA will continue to rigorously review appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring individual student's growth and pass/fail rates, including updating tutoring attendees, communication to parents, and all other state compliance issues. It will continue to promote high student achievement and growth, will place a high emphasis on effectively analyzing student's data (AIMS Scores Stanford 10 Scores AZELLA, Internal Benchmarks; Galileo, and Dibbles), and adjust and monitor instruction. This system of based practices allows instructors to know exactly what to teach and removes the majority of subjectivity out of what instructors need to teach and what concepts students need to learn. By tracking student achievement it allows EMA to see trends in instructors, instruction, and the curriculum for strategic change when needed. EMA is dedicated to the success of its entire family and will continue to strive towards greatness in the domains of body, mind, and spirit.

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# APPENDIX B

## Evidence of Sufficient Progress

The table below reflects the materials/ items referenced in the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress and whether the evidence was confirmed during the site visit.

Evidence of Sufficient Progress		
Evidence Requested	Confirmed at Site Visit	Sufficient
Teacher Evaluation Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Completed formal evaluation with lesson plan</li> <li>o Completed informal evaluation form</li> </ul>	X
Addendums to pacing calendars and curriculum maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Curriculum maps for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA</li> <li>o Pacing Calendar for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade</li> </ul>	X
Quarterly data presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Classroom student assessment data report</li> </ul>	X
Assessment analysis identifying standards to master	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Galileo reports</li> </ul>	X
Tutoring lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Galileo assessments created by teachers to target specific standards.</li> </ul>	X
PLC meeting agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sign-in sheets</li> <li>o Agendas</li> </ul>	X
Completed classroom observation form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Completed informal evaluation</li> </ul>	X
Completed teacher evaluation form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Completed formal evaluation with lesson plan</li> </ul>	X

# APPENDIX C

## Demonstration of Sufficient Progress Evaluation

## Demonstration of Sufficient Progress Evaluation Instrument

Charter Holder Name: Espiritu Community  
 Development Corporation  
 School Name: Esperanza Montessori Academy  
 Date Submitted: 2/8/13

Required for: Transfer Application  
 Evaluation Completed: 4/10/13

I = Result after initial evaluation

S = Result after evaluation of information collected from the site visit

Measure	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Comments
1a. Student Median Growth Percentile (SGP) Math	I/S		
1b. Student Median Growth Percentile (SGP) Bottom 25% Math	I/S		
2a. Percent Passing Math	I/S		
2a. Percent Passing Reading	I/S		
2b. Composite School Comparison Reading	I/S		
2c. Subgroup Comparison Students with disabilities Math	I/S		
2c. Subgroup Comparison Students with disabilities Reading	I/S		
3a. A-F Letter Grade State Accountability System	I/S		